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The Citizens Advisory Panel


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Of The Los Angeles Bunker Hill
And Central Business District
Circulation/Distribution System Program
Administered By
The Community Redevelopment Agency
Of The City of Los Angeles.

July 1976



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THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES; CALIFORNIA
CITIZENS ADVISORY PANEL FOR THE LOS ANGELES BUNKER HILL AND
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CIRCULATION/DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM PROGRAM

August 2, 1976

Mr. Robert E. Patricelli
Administrator
Urban Mass Transportation Administration
400 - 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

City pl. Central city LA
street railways
metro transp
[L.A. citizens advisory panel for
the ... program]

Dear Mr. Patricelli:

Members of the Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP), through 14-months of intensive participation in the L.A. Bunker Hill and Central Business District Circulation/Distribution System Program, have made a strong commitment to their belief that an improved and balanced Circulation/Distribution System is necessary for downtown Los Angeles to adequately serve peripheral communities and regional needs in the future.

As stated in a recent CAP report,* the CAP cannot support the implementation of the downtown people-mover currently recommended by the Community Redevelopment Agency Transportation Staff (Agency staff). We do not believe that existing program data supports the Agency staff conclusions, particularly concerning route location. However, we strongly support investment in improved and balanced Circulation/Distribution system for downtown Los Angeles and have worked long and hard towards that goal. Many CAP members desire to continue their efforts because they are aware that an answer has not yet been found for the transit needs of our central city area.

For this reason, the CAP leadership supports continued study on the condition that such a study is structured to address past and future CAP issues and concerns during subsequent study phases. The Agency staff has told us that they concur with the validity of many of the issues and concerns which we have raised and that they believe these must be addressed in any future studies. One of the important reasons the Agency is requesting approval of the continued study is to address these CAP questions. The members of the CAP have been assured by Agency staff that the study is being structured to assure that CAP issues and concerns will be satisfactorily resolved before requests to implement any component of a Circulation/Distribution System in downtown Los Angeles are submitted.

* Report of the Citizens Advisory Panel, July, 1976, 15 pages.

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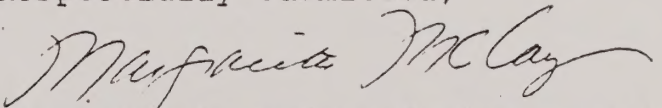
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In structuring a proposal (pre-application for Federal funds, and application for State Proposition 5 ten percent funds) for further planning studies to finalize during the next seven months the feasibility of utilizing a variety of transportation elements in downtown Los Angeles the CAP wants assurances that the studies will:

1. Include citizen participation throughout the entire period of the study and in all components of the study; that those members of the CAP interested in continuing to participate be offered such a role, and that adequate staff and other support resources be provided to allow effective citizen participation to take place.
2. Proceed under an organizational framework which includes opportunities, staff, and financial resources for inter-agency, municipal and regional coordination for comprehensive planning to assure that engineering plans, route locations and implementation responsibilities are fully coordinated with, and are designed to serve, future population distribution and land uses.
3. Provide for a balanced central city transportation system serving existing and future needs of the downtown, the peripheral communities, and the region, and that such a system be expressed in a comprehensive central city transportation system plan.
4. Contain flexibility in order that components of a balanced transportation system (including flexibility in the currently proposed people-mover route location and design) will be susceptible to adjustment to permit coordination of all components with comprehensive planning considerations.

It is important to note that this statement does not constitute CAP approval of any particular element of the proposed Circulation/Distribution System. Further, no ratification by our general body or official change in our report* has yet been made. However, this statement does communicate a conclusion of the CAP leadership that studies be allowed to continue in order to produce the basis for both citizen and public officials to determine if any or all components of a central city transportation system will be appropriate for Los Angeles.

Respectfully submitted,



Margarita P. McCoy, Chairperson
Citizen Advisory Panel

REPORT OF THE CITIZENS' ADVISORY PANEL

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I. Introduction

The Citizens' Advisory Panel (CAP) of the Los Angeles Bunker Hill and Central Business District Downtown People Mover Project, after twelve months of intensive study of all components of the planning development of this project, now finds it necessary to make a strong statement of our position on a downtown transportation system:

We do NOT support the expenditure of City, State or Federal funds for the proposed AGT/SLT people mover between the Convention Center and Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

The reasons for our opposition will be detailed in the report which follows. The occasion for this statement arises from actions of the Federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration. It is our understanding that a very large sum of money will be offered to several eligible cities willing to serve as demonstration sites for a transportation technology as yet untried in an urban environment. One of those cities could be Los Angeles. It is our concern that, by intervening in local decision processes with coercive financial inducements, the federal government will, once again, distort and override the careful, coordinated and comprehensive planning necessary to address the survival of our central city. As thoroughly informed, demonstrably responsible citizens of Los Angeles, we must warn our city that acceptance of the downtown transportation system as now proposed for federal funding appears to be a most dangerous,

destructive and expensive decision, with possible public and private costs which may be far in excess of initial estimates (\$126 million).

The CAP was formed in June of 1975 from a list of some 125 citizens invited by the Mayor to volunteer this service to the community. Since that time citizens have met regularly, with attendance fluctuating between 10-50 members, meeting at least bi-weekly and often weekly to discuss, debate and resolve citizen positions on downtown problems in relation to proposed transportation systems. The diligence, commitment and developed expertise of the group has been remarkable.

CAP wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the CRA in supporting citizen input into this Program. A great effort has been expended in providing citizens with available information, the means for discussion, and communication with the Board of the CRA.

Phase I of our CAP project was the creation of a set of goals and objectives* for the Circulation/Distribution System (CDS) for the Central Business District (CBD). Those goals and objectives have continued to inform our considerations and recommendations throughout our work. Our goals were chosen as derivative from and supportive of the Los Angeles Central City Community Plan, as adopted by the Los Angeles City Council on May 5, 1974.

* "Appendix: Evolution of Goals and Objectives," Circulation and Distribution Program, Phase One: Community Participation, Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, 1975.

From these initial positions, CAP's interests have centered on an insistence on comprehensive planning, the interrelationship of people, land use and transit. This relationship is not confined to the downtown, but encompasses those communities peripheral to the downtown--which are integral to the study. A range of study committees was formed to focus on special interests of the CAP and, of these, the two which met most frequently were the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the Social Concerns Committee. Two other committees which worked with equal commitment, although with a smaller membership constrained by the need for subject expertise, were the Technological Committee and the Economics Committee. The findings of these four committees, supplemented by other committee resolutions and supported by the general CAP membership form the text of the conclusions and recommendations which follow.

II. Reasons for CAP Opposition to Proposed AGT/SLT

The points of CAP opposition to the proposed transit system are summarized below. A more detailed development of support for CAP's findings appears in a later section, CAP Committee Reports.

1. The chosen alternative does not encourage the balanced land use of development necessary to reflect the goals of the City Council-approved Los Angeles Central City Community Plan.
 - The selection of Alignment A, the route of the AGT/SLT recommended by Community Redevelopment Agency staff, reinforces a past history of imbalanced resource allocation in the downtown; the West Side receives more than its proper share of funding.
 - Hence, the deterioration of the East and Central sections of the CBD will not be stemmed.
 - Implementation of the proposed AGT/SLT will inhibit the East Side rehabilitation and redevelopment program.
 - The cost of an AGT alignment precludes implementation of a balanced transportation system for all of downtown, allocating resources away from those who most need an improved transit system.

2. The Program does not adequately address accessibility to jobs, services, shopping, cultural and recreational activities for all residents, workers and visitors in the Central City and its peripheral communities.
 - The AGT, as envisioned, cannot provide a system flexible enough to serve both commuters and those who use other activity centers.
 - The system appears to respond to commuters' needs at the expense of circulation needs of local users, particularly the elderly, handicapped, transit dependent.
 - Residents of the peripheral communities are dependent upon the Central City, as is the commercial sector of the Central City upon them. However, the Program's source of funding limits the inclusion of peripheral communities as an integral part of the CBD.
3. The physical scale of the proposed AGT/SLT, as designed to serve a primarily commuter clientele, is inappropriate for use in most areas of the Central City.
4. The Program does not include all of the necessary components for a complete circulation/distribution system.
 - The Program does not include an improved bus system for those sections of the CBD not served by the AGT/SLT.
 - The Program does not include an examination of the interrelationships of bus and AGT/SLT to achieve a

total circulation system for downtown.

- Movement of goods as part of the system has not been seriously considered.
5. AGT/SLT alignments have not recognized or sought to reinforce many existing activity centers important to users of the CBD. Further, the Program does not show attempts to integrate stations with other functions to augment social and economic benefits.
 6. Technology of AGT/SLT systems are still untested in urban environments.
 - Personal safety of users of unmanned vehicles in an urban setting is still untested.
 7. The Program indicates that there is no significant difference in alleviation of congestion between the AGT/SLT system and an All-Bus Alternative.
 8. The risk of negative impacts is potentially too great to justify using Los Angeles CBD as a test area for demonstrating the appropriateness of an AGT/SLT in a Central City setting.
 - Mass Rapid Transit Starter Line plans are still unsettled. The planning of an AGT/SLT serving regional commuters and an MRT Starter Line must be coordinated.

III. CAP Recommendations

Until a transportation planning program indicates more benefit to downtown than we have seen in this Program, CAP favors maintaining an all-bus system, augmenting it as necessary to provide full service to regional commuters as well as to downtown users and peripheral community residents. An all-bus system can provide flexibility and variation in design and routing.

In the event that the decision is made to build an AGT in Central City Los Angeles, CAP would like to make the following suggestions:

- A very short segment, useful and adequate to test the system in a downtown setting, should be built before any further commitments are made.
- The AGT should be designed to integrate effectively with the CBD environment in terms of scale, car and guideway design, guideway locations on streets, and station design.
- Any stations built should serve other functional uses as much as possible. They should be paid for by the private commercial sector, which will potentially benefit the most.

IV. Conclusions

We recognize that the demands we are making for the planning and implementation of a transit system for downtown Los Angeles are difficult to meet. Our demands require a system designed to match client needs; discrete means coordinated to achieve a balanced end; a comprehensive system which integrates transportation and development in service to the city as a whole, to the detriment of none of its parts. Transit by itself cannot promote development, but properly planned and executed it is an essential tool for the revitalization of the Central City.

Investing all of our transit resources in a single line to serve a single client group in a single city area is not a proper plan. Nor could a massive, visually obtrusive and inflexible system be extended from the proposed west line to serve other, older areas of the city. As we have noted, the AGT size and scale proposed would not only be inappropriate, but might spell the destruction of the existing social and commercial systems of the eastern sections of the Central Business District.

We believe that, in order to achieve the necessary coordination of transit service systems, the public agencies of metropolitan Los Angeles must be allowed and required to coordinate their work. No single agency, such as the Community Redevelopment Agency, can achieve

this by itself. We believe that, in order to serve the many metropolitan client groups for downtown transit, citizen groups must participate and inform the work of all coordinating agencies, including the Southern California Rapid Transit District.

We strongly support investment in improved transit for downtown Los Angeles. We have worked long and hard toward that goal. Many of us will continue our efforts because we are all aware that we have not yet found the answer to the transit needs of our Central City and its citizens.

V. CAP Committee Reports

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

- As CAP members, we maintain that any circulation/distribution system in the Central City must be a comprehensively planned and balanced system which responds to all types of user needs--local and regional, as well as resident, worker and visitor.
- The Committee used as a basis for its work the following considerations: (1) the interface of the CBD transportation plan with the City, County, and regional plans, including land development, transportation, environment and human services; and (2) compatibility of existing and planned transportation with needs of all residents and employees in Central City and adjacent communities, including residential, commercial, industrial, social services (both public and private), and recreation/leisure activities.
- In support of the Central City Community Plan, we believe that evaluation of alternatives must be based upon this plan, as it is imperative that the development of the plan get underway. If the Community Plan and the Program alternatives do not agree, the alternatives are considered unacceptable. The CAP believes consideration should be given to ways in which a transit system can direct growth to achieve both the goals and objectives of the study and of the Central City Community Plan, focusing attention on potential revitalization of areas within the CBD through implementation of a circulation/distribution system.
- The CAP holds fast to the concern that alternatives not be based on the CBD as is, but rather should be focused on what should be! CAP members believe that there should be a balanced mix of density and development in Central City, and that population growth should be equally distributed among the areas of Bunker Hill, Central City East, and South Park, rather than follow existing trends. With both housing and office potential realized, the Central City could become an area for people to both live and work, de-emphasizing the need for automobile ownership.
- We believe that the Program's approach should have included not only service to Bunker Hill and the new financial district, but also the serious consideration of rejuvenation on the east side. We suggest that the Community Redevelopment Agency actively seek commitments from appropriate agencies to promote development and transportation on the east side.
- We support the introduction of more low, medium and high cost housing in the Central City to coordinate with the adopted Central City Community Plan.

- We believe that the Program has concentrated on one technological system (AGT) at the expense of a balanced analysis of the components necessary for a total system.
- The Program Team has not demonstrated consideration of the components necessary to a balanced system. Before we can support any alignment we must see comprehensive planning on the east side, integrating transit (buses, pedways, AGT) with development.
- We are concerned that a circulation/distribution system meet the varying needs of the Central City users. If an AGT is selected, it must (1) provide service to the large number of people going to work, which suggests larger and express service, and (2) provide service to the people who shop and use the other activity centers, which suggests a smaller scale system with more frequent stops.
- We feel strongly that AGT stations should become an integral part of commercial activity centers. Designing the stations without isolating them as transit facilities encourages both economic and social benefits.
- Whatever system is finally chosen, it should provide full service at frequent intervals--24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

- We find that the Program has not adequately addressed the accessibility to jobs, services, shopping, cultural and recreational activities for all residents, visitors, and workers in the Central City and its peripheral communities.
- We find that there has been an emphasis on commercial development in the Program rather than on residential values.
- We believe that the cost of any of the AGT alignments precludes implementation of a balanced transportation system for all of downtown. We believe that the implementation of Alignment A represents the allocation of current resources away from those who most need an improved public transit system.
- We view all of the AGT alternatives as responding primarily to commuters' distribution needs at the expense of circulation needs of residents, workers and visitors. In each of the proposed AGT alignments, we are concerned that the regional commuter has been given priority over other users of a downtown transportation system. For example, the distance between stations along each of the alignments does not encourage shoppers to use the AGT.

- We are gratified to see that the concept of peripheral garages has been eliminated from the Program, and we hope that this understanding will remain in the future. We believe that placement of these garages in peripheral communities may, in certain instances, be destructive to them. We consider the peripheral communities to be an integral part of the Central City and recommend that they be considered as such in the Program.
- We believe that Alignment A, the route of the AGT recommended by Community Redevelopment Agency staff, maximizes efficiency to the transit commuter to and from work, but its program of funding is at the expense of the deteriorating central and eastern areas of the downtown. We believe that the selection of Alignment A as a first increment reinforces a past history of imbalanced resource allocation in the downtown--the west side receives more than its proper share of funding.
- We believe that the AGT system, on the scale envisioned, is not appropriate to transportation on the east side. This side of the Central City requires a smaller scale mode with shorter stops and ease in getting on and off at will.
- We believe that on Alignments B and C serious detrimental impact on small and marginal businesses may result from disruption of business during the length of construction time. In addition, we believe that the scale of the AGT as now proposed is inappropriate to the needs and uses of these areas.
- We believe that the emphasis on peak hour regional service may adversely affect local transportation service to residents of the Central City and of the peripheral communities. As an example, for the many blue collar workers, maintenance workers and others who work evening or graveyard shifts, the decline or absence of evening public transit service imperils their access to livelihood.

TECHNOLOGY

- As CAP members, we continue to have reservations about the applicability of an AGT/SLT system to the Central City urban environment of Los Angeles. We question past experience with the Morgantown, Sea-Tac, Tampa and Dallas systems as suitable for application to a generalized transportation system necessary to serve the core of a major city.
- We are concerned that Los Angeles not be committed to AGT/SLT technology until it is proven operable in a downtown setting. This includes the questions of reliability, maintenance, vandalism and cost to the City should the system not be proven fully operable.

- It is suggested that should an AGT/SLT be selected by the decision-makers, a small scale increment, of the shortest length necessary to adequately test the system, be built initially in order to demonstrate the applicability of the technology in an urban framework before any further commitment is made.
- We believe that concepts for improved bus operation, such as the elimination of line haul routes and reduction of bus turns in the Central City, or improved and available vehicle designs such as super-wide doors and double deck vehicles, were not considered in sufficient detail by the Program.
- Also, we believe that adequate consideration was not given to the advantages of an all-bus CDS system in respect to flexibility and variation in design and routing. Bus routes can be changed, supplemented or diminished relatively easily in response to the changes inevitable in the development of a dynamic downtown.

ECONOMICS

- We believe that a major justification for an AGT/SLT in the Central City must be positive economic impact, and that a more detailed evaluation of the major economic trade-offs within each of the three alternatives (null, all-bus, and bus/AGT) is required.
- From a traffic engineering point of view only we are told that there is no significant difference between the reduction of congestion afforded by the AGT and the all-bus alternatives. The Program has not produced a comparison between the traffic congestion effects of an AGT and the various traffic policies--such as traffic engineering, the termination of free and subsidized parking for public employees, and parking management--which might be implemented at less cost.
- We question the demand forecasts for the AGT alignments. While the Program's mid employment projection for 1990 indicates an equal number of employees on the east and west sides of the Central City, the projected total daily passengers on Alignment A is 31,200 while on Alignment B it is 21,000. Therefore, although the employees are equal in number, their forecasted demands are not. The patronage figures appear to represent primarily regional commuters whose destination is the west side of the Central City rather than the local, public transportation users who patronize the commercial facilities on the east side.
- We also believe that any transportation system for the Central City must interface with regional transit. If, as forecast by SCAG for the 230,000 employment level, there is a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)

system, CAP feels that an AGT, if built, should complement the MRT's function in the Central City. The CAP feels that the economic impact of a possible duplication of the proposed AGT/MRT corridors must be thoroughly investigated.

- If the Automated Guideway Transit system should achieve approval in a final round of evaluations by public authorities, we believe that the local government should not be expected to contribute the local share (20%) of the capital costs of the project. We feel that the Federal government's share of the capital costs (80%) is sufficient payment for the benefits which will accrue to the public sector from an AGT. We believe that the private sector should provide the local share of all the costs associated with an AGT, and that local public funds should be directed toward relieving other urgent social demands such as housing, tax relief and other transportation needs. There is need for assessment of regional trade-offs of other social investments before any one particular project can be justified.

If the local government share of 20% should be provided for an AGT, it should not be forthcoming without finding ways to recoup local government's investment. We suggest that the following alternatives be explored:

1. The application of a value recapture formula to increased rents in new and existing buildings in the vicinity of AGT stations, which can be attributed to improved access resulting from an AGT.
2. The application of a tax increment formula to new construction in the Central City which can be attributed to the AGT. Tax increment funds used in this manner should not include increases in property values due to inflation.
3. The purchase and leasing by the Community Redevelopment Agency or other public entity of lands around the AGT stations to private developers.
4. The construction of AGT stations by the private sector on private land in conjunction with other new construction.
5. The creation of special assessment districts around the AGT stations.
6. The issuance of bonds.
7. The use of revenues generated from fares charged on an AGT.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- CAP members believe that there are significant negative visual impacts associated with the AGT. It will be composed of a massive structure, approximately 24' to 28' wide, with 6' to 8' columns erected on the sidewalk and extending out to one side of the street, which portends a very dramatic and drastic change to be imposed upon downtown streets.
- The massive overhang would tend to darken building entrances and store fronts, impede access of pedestrians, and discourage shoppers.
- The lengthy disruption on the sidewalks and streets during and following construction would have a deleterious economic effect on businesses.
- Drifting dust and safety effects of overhead traffic on crowded pedestrian walkways is still unknown. However, the addition of columns on sidewalks and streets will require innovative cleaning methods, with possible added costs for street cleaning.
- The environmental design emphasis has made no attempt to harmonize the system with the CBD fabric, or to ameliorate its effect on the CBD. CAP believes that any transportation system for CBD should incorporate new ideas in a well-designed structure, complementing the various themes of the city centers--financial, civic, cultural, ethnic, etc., harmonizing and humanizing the structure with buildings on the street.
- In a report prepared by Program consultants, Kaiser Engineers points out that

"AGT systems offer the potential for a relatively high level of circulation/distribution service in a downtown area. However, the cost, both construction and operating, the disruption, both during and after construction, and the visual impact is generally much greater with AGT than with the other transit technologies described earlier in this report. In addition, some aspects of AGT service, such as access and route flexibility are not as good as many of the other technologies." (Table 27A, Report 75-98R, January, 1976.)

- Responding to the need to conserve energy by a reduction of auto traffic in the CBD, the study does not demonstrate that addition of an AGT would bring a significant reduction in traffic or in vehicle miles travelled. Thus pollution and energy consumption would not be measurably reduced.



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